



karen amster-young :: The Desk Chair Chronicles

...weekly observations & discoveries from manhattan to the east end...

“Isn’t Sarah Palin so compulsively watchable?” I asked a friend over Starbucks recently. I mean, I’m not a fan, but I can’t stop watching her. My friend looked at me as if I had lost my mind. New Yorkers are so wonderfully subtle. “You of all people are mesmerized by her?” she asked incredulously. Shit. I didn’t say mesmerized I thought to myself. “I just mean I can’t stop watching her and all of the election stuff,” I back-peddled feeling too tired to have this conversation. I am still trying to figure out where this woman came from. I mean Hillary aged 10 years working her butt off to try to get in to the White House and now this ultra conservative from Alaska may be in the Oval Office with John? And does she really hunt Caribou? What the heck is Caribou? Knowing New York, whatever it is it will be on the menu of some trendy New York City restaurant in November. I’m even taping The View now because Joy Behar’s bravado is actually mesmerizing. She was also on Larry King tonight and he asked her if she (Joy) thinks she is becoming a bit Mark Twain-like as she provides more social commentary rather than comedy. Joy responded with her usual wit and said “I like to think of myself as a “fundit” rather than a pundit. I thought that was sharp.

My Fall Preview issues of Time Out, New York magazine and the New York Times are sitting on my desk. Every time I go to mark off the cultural events, exhibits and wonderful things I must do in the coming months I get pulled away by some, yes you got it, compulsively watchable news item or commentary. Palin. Obama. Biden. Palin. The freakin’ economy. Do you believe what is going on? The nature of the economic fallout is unprecedented: entire investment banks going bankrupt. I mean this is not just hearing about 1000 people being layed off at a few firms. The magnitude of this crisis is not even something I can comprehend. Once again the checks and balances are not there. Where the hell were the people that are supposed to make sure this shit doesn’t happen? Don’t get me started. Doesn’t it seem our government is always putting safeguards in to place after a crisis – whether devastating hurricanes or natural disasters; unthinkable acts of terrorism and now, for the national economy? I know these are completely different things but all of a sudden corporate America is as incompetent as our government? I am not suggesting that government should ever control corporate America – at least I never thought about that. Capitalism is part of what makes America great. But, my G-d, how did these companies continue to operate without anyone saying, “Wait a second, we’re in fucking trouble” before everything collapsed?

It’s been back to school time now for a couple of weeks. Everyone is quickly losing their summer glow as we run around trying to get it together for the new season. Moms are starting to have that harried look again as we deal with our kids’ overscheduled lives: soccer, religious school, music lessons, play dates, new teachers, homework and a normal bedtime after almost three months of unstructured bliss. The glow is fading even faster among the Wall Street crowd and unemployed. New goals, new season. It’s all possible. Lose weight, start yoga, visit your Mother-in-Law more often, reconnect with friends. I mean it’s all good and we get up everyday with the best intentions; but someone has to stop making all the crap so compulsively watchable. I promised myself that I will finish looking through the Fall Preview issues this week; I would be way too stressed if they remained untouched and the Winter Vacations issues arrived or — this would really be pathetic — the Spring Preview issues come in the mail with the Fall Issues untouched. So much pressure – ha.

Okay, I’m in the Arts Section. And, I am not kidding. There is a recommended, “can’t miss” exhibit entitled, “SHIT,” by Andres Serrano. How appropriate right now considering what is going on in our country. It is literally an art show featuring photographs of shit by this controversial artist. I can’t even pretend to want to give you details on this but in case you care it is at the Yvon Lambert Gallery. For me, well...I think to escape the daily shit and the country’s pile of shit at the moment I will just go see the new Van Gogh exhibit at MOMA and, how would I survive the season without advance tickets to High School Musical 3? My daughter was the first to tell me, “But Mommmy, this is the first time it is in the theaters and not on TV. Hey, it’s playing at the Ziegfeld next month. At least I will be surrounded by a bit of movie history. Theaters in New York don’t get much better than the Ziegfeld.

Don’t forget to vote.
